SPEEDE*ExPRESS* SP🔵TLIGHT

EDI for Education Newsletter

Standardization of **P**ostsecondary **E**ducation **E**lectronic **D**ata **E**xchange   **Ex**change of **P**ermanent **R**ecord **E**lectronically for **S**tudents and **S**chools

HELP DESK

"How can I subscribe to the Spotlight?"

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"Are there any EDI conferences coming up?"

•

"Who can I contact to set up an EDI Implementation Workshop for my state?"

As always, the SPEEDE/ExPRESS Help Desk is here to answer your questions. Just dial the toll-free number below and leave a message detailing your inquiry and a member of the Help Desk staff will contact you with the information you requested. Whether you have technical or informational questions, the Help Desk staff will find the answer for you, or direct you to someone who can. Dial **1-800-644-SPEX** (7739)! Or visit the SPEEDE/ExPRESS homepage at ***http:// nces.ed.gov/edi.html.***

EDI: Shape Up and Ship Out

The first in a three-part series, this article is designed to provide EDI champions with guidelines to ensure successful deployment of EDI as an enabling technology for achieving the goal of exchanging timely, uniform, and accurate educational information in order to improve decision-making. The guidelines have been designed for state-wide implementations because the greatest volume of records transfer typically occurs within state boundaries, however, the concepts are scaleable and would work for local and regional initiatives as well.

Phase 1: Mobilize the Educational Community

If educational institutions are to realize the maximum benefits that EDI can bring, it is incumbent that all the stakeholders are represented throughout the deployment process. The recommended first phase of initiating a state or regional EDI program in education is to bring the potential beneficiaries to the table in order to mobilize resources towards the common goal of implementing EDI.

1. Educate the Educators

The essential first step in getting an EDI program off the ground is to bring together decision makers from institutions that have the most to gain from the technology. If the electronic exchange of student records is the focus, all levels of the educational community within the state or region should be invited to learn and collaborate. This would likely include postsecondary, elementary/secondary, state and regional education agencies, EDI and administrative software vendors, and professional organizations representing the decision-makers within education at-large.

Hosting a conference or workshop focused upon EDI is an excellent forum for introducing the technology to educational administrators. The agenda should include EDI introductory sessions as well as showcase sessions delivered by practitioners from education and other related government and/or business entities that have become EDI enabled. All participants should leave with a clear understanding of what EDI is and what it can do for their institutions.

2. Assess Feasibility

After gaining a general understanding of EDI and the benefits to be realized from its use, the next step would be to convene decision-makers from schools and institutions who are interested in pursuing the technology. The first question that this group would need to answer is whether there is a strong business case that would support the adoption of EDI technology to share records. It is important to recognize upfront that the maximum benefits can only be realized if there are ample committed organizations with enough record volume to justify the expenditure.

Watt's Next?

Look for these and other exciting articles in the Summer Spotlight!

ANSI ASC X12 Standards

Follow the progress of the Transaction Set development for Human Resources and Institutional Records. Find out what happened at the June meeting.

Case in Point

The Spotlight will continue its examination of the statewide EDI program in Iowa, Project EASIER. The interview will continue to delve into the behind-the-scenes activity of the inception and implementation of their program.

Phase II--EDI Implementation

The next SPEEDE/ExPRESS Spotlight will examine Phase II of EDI implementation, "Developing An Implementation Strategy." Look for helpful implementation guidelines and recommendations to follow when you begin your EDI program.

Conference Connection

MOSIS '98

MOSIS (Management of Student Information Systems) is an annual summer conference sponsored by the Southern Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (SACRAO). MOSIS '98 provides an opportunity for higher education professionals interested in information systems and technology to share information and exchange strategies in a casual setting.

This year's conference, *Technology To Help You Do Your Job Better*, will be occurring in Raleigh, North Carolina from July 19-21, 1998 and will feature a pre-conference workshop on July 19th from 1:00 pm to 4:30 pm on "How to Implement a State-Wide EDI Program". EDI related conference sessions include: "Implementing Web Registration Using SCT-Banner at UNC-Greensboro"; "System-wide Common Application for Admission: Using WWW and Data Transfer Technologies to Collect and Distribute Admission Applications for Multiple Institutions"; "Electronic Test Score Reporting"; and "EDI in North Carolina."

To obtain more information or to register for the MOSIS conference, visit their web site at: *http://mosis.sc.edu/*

A great web site to monitor for conference information is the DISA web site. Look for exciting seminars and conferences coming to your area like "Fundamentals of EDI--Integration and Implementation" in Philadelphia in late June, or "Data Analysis and Mapping" in Alexandria, VA, this July.
http://www.disa.org

EDI Workshop in San Antonio a Success

Twenty-four participants representing 14 educational agencies attended the "How To Implement a Successful State-Wide EDI Program" workshop in San Antonio on March 1, 1998.

The Statistical Networking Applications Project (SNAP) team delivered three modules of the new curriculum covering: Introduction to EDI in Education; EDI Tools & Requirements; and EDI Implementation. The workshop also featured presentations by EDI champions from Texas, Iowa, Alaska, and Nevada sharing lessons learned and tips from their experiences. The SNAP team would like to formally thank Brenda O'Donnell, Alaska DOE; Denise Quon, Nevada DOE; Mike Read, Austin ISD; and Lee Tack, Iowa DOE for dedicating their time to assist others.

Based upon input from the workshop participants, the SNAP team will be modifying this curriculum to better meet the needs of future EDI implementers from the educational community. This product, consisting of a Powerpoint Show, Instructor's Guide, and Student Guide will be made available in electronic form to the educational community via the SPEEDE/ExPRESS WWW site this summer. Groups interested in having this curriculum delivered by the SNAP team are encouraged to contact Jill Hanson at *jhanson@sierrasys.com*.

WWW EDI Server for Education Task Force

On January 27, 1998 the National Forum on Education Statistics' Technology, Dissemination, and Communications Committee established a task force to provide leadership and guidance towards the development and implementation of the WWW EDI Server for Education. Roy Yeagley, Superintendent, Rochester School District (NH), was appointed task force chair. Individuals from 19 organizations volunteered to serve on the task force.

The Task Force convened its first meeting March 4, 1998 in San Antonio. The group reviewed the status of the server, which was scheduled to be ready for field testing at the end of April. A number of agencies expressed interest in participating in a field test once they had a better understanding of the resource requirements to be placed upon them. This information will be developed along with a request for participation and will be shortly forthcoming.

The next meeting of the WWW EDI Server Task Force is scheduled for 8:30 am – 4:30 pm, July 27, 1998 at the Mayflower Hotel in Washington DC. This meeting will coincide with the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Summer Data Conference (*http://nces.ed.gov*) and National Forum on Education Statistics meetings.

A moderated listserv also has been established to serve as a communications forum for all parties interested in the server. Subscriptions to the listserv can be obtained by sending an e-mail request to Jill Hanson at *jhanson@sierrasys.com*.

3. Establish Advisory Committee

Once it has been determined that utilizing EDI to share records is in the best interest of the educational community, recruit individuals to serve on an advisory committee to assist in deployment planning. The first assignment of this group would be to clearly define the overall mission and expectations. Once established, the advisory group should be ready for Phase II: Develop Implementation Strategy, which will be the focus of the Summer Spotlight.

To better understand the initial phase of EDI implementation, refer to the "Case In Point" article on page 6. This feature illustrates similar Phase One achievements of the Iowa state-wide EDI program called "Project EASIER".

There are many issues to be considered when beginning an EDI program. For additional information, contact Jill Hanson (jhanson@sierrasys.com) of the Statistical Networking Applications Project (SNAP) to find out where and when the next "How to Implement a Statewide EDI Program" workshop will be held or to schedule one in your area.

AACRAO Highlights

Educational Testing Service Pilot

ETS will be piloting electronic score reporting during the months of May and June 1998 with six universities. The pilot schools are Ohio State University, University of Pennsylvania, University of California at Berkley, University of California at Los Angeles, University of Texas at Austin and University of Toronto. The pilot will use TOEFL, GRE and SAT score reporting files. The pilot will utilize the current proprietary formats as well as TS 138. Implementation guides are being finalized for TOEFL, GRE and SAT. Implementation for GRE, GMAT, TOEFL and SAT is planned for October, 1998.

Standards Council to Begin Membership Year

The Postsecondary Electronic Standards Council, a partnership of 22 organizations promoting use of electronic standards in higher education, launches its first membership campaign in May 1998. Beginning July 1st, membership will provide organizations opportunities to participate in standard-setting enterprises with other stakeholders from the higher education community. Information on membership benefits, activities and fees is available at *www.standardscouncil.org,* or contact Betsy Bainbridge, Director, at (202) 293-7383.

AACRAO's 9th Annual EDI in Education Workshop

The 9th Annual EDI in Education workshop will be held in Baton Rouge, LA, on October 26-28, 1998, at the Radisson Hotel and Conference Center.
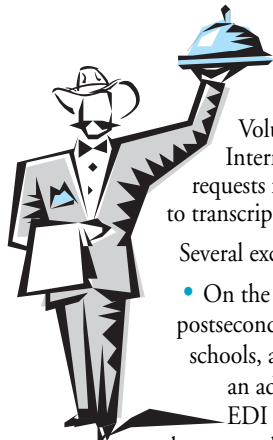
An EDI in Education web site will contain all the latest information on program sessions and workshop activities as these develop. It will be accessible from the AACRAO page (*www.aacrao.com*), among other sites.

There will be four session tracks (general, beginner, advanced, other) and eight session periods over the three days. The sessions will include overviews, mapping sessions for everyone, encryption and security, information on IPEDS, Financial Aid transactions, and the new test score reporting transaction set.

LAC chair for the workshop is Robert Doolos (*rdoolos@lsu.edu*) of Louisiana State University, and sharing program chair duties are Suzanne Anderson (*smwa@bradley.bradley.edu*) of BradleyUniversity, and Janet Busekist (*jlb@selu.edu*) of Southeastern Louisiana University. Jerry Bracken (*jdbracke@byu.edu*) of Brigham Young University is handling vendor relations and exhibits.

So, make your plans to head to Louisiana in the fall. As the Louisiana Tourist Commission likes to put it, "Come as you are...Leave different."

The University of Texas Server Update

The EDI Internet Server, provided by the University of Texas at Austin, is a free, secure, centralized facility that helps educational entities exchange ANSI X12-compliant documents using the Internet. For information about registering and using the EDI Internet Server, please check out *http://www.utexas.edu/student/giac/speede/ediserv.html*.

Volume on the EDI Internet Server continues to rise. During March, 1998, 8,595 documents passed through the EDI Internet Server, involving 53 sending and 62 receiving institutions. These counts included acknowledgements (TS131), requests for transcripts (TS146), reply to requests for transcripts (TS147) and functional acknowledgements (TS997), in addition to transcripts themselves (TS130).

Several exciting projects are taking place which involve the EDI Internet Server.

• On the pK-12 front, the Texas Education Service Center for Region 20 has started a pilot with 10 high schools and six postsecondary institutions for sending transcripts. Region 20 provides mainframe service to 58 school districts involving 70 high schools, and all these high schools will be able to send to colleges when the pilot is completed. Region 20 also provides software to an additional 700 school districts involving 1000 additional high schools. The next step after implementing the mainframe EDI transmission is to upgrade the software in the schools to also handle EDI. They ultimately plan to exchange documents between school districts. When this project is fully implemented, the volume of documents in the EDI Internet Server will dwarf what we are currently handling.

• Work is beginning on a pilot to test out the capability of sending test scores using the TS138. This could really cut down the time required for schools to received scores.

• The State of Texas has a mandate to create a statewide common application for public universities. The plan is to use the TS189 - Application for Admission and the EDI Internet Server to distribute the applications to the institutions involved.

• Finally, the Texas ETN, a group of 26 universities and colleges that has been using a proprietary, non-ANSI X12 format to exchange transcripts, is continuing to convert to SPEEDE/ExPRESS. Considerable cost savings are expected, as the value-added network being used by the ETN costs UT Austin alone around $8,000 per year for transcripts.

As you can see, it is a very exciting time for the EDI Internet Server. You need to be a part of it. Download a copy of the EDI Internet Server Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) from the web site listed above, register, and start sending EDI documents today.

EDI Standards Update

ANSI ASC X12 Subcommittee A Education Update

Transaction Set 130 Student Educational Record The Student Records Task Group (SRTG), Task Group 2, welcomes Wally Reeves to the group. He is a senior systems analyst at the University of Texas at Austin and represents AACRAO. The SRTG last met in February at the X12 meeting in Anaheim and sent forward several data maintenance items for approval from the full X12 membership. TG2 continues to meet monthly via conference call to address data maintenance issues and provide feedback regarding development of the next Implementation Guideline document, which will be released in the beginning of May. To stay current with their work, interested parties are encouraged to subscribe to their listserv at the DISA WWW site: *http://www.disa.org/apps/listserve/listserve.cfm.*

Transaction Set 132 Human Resource Record The Human Resource Task Group (HRTG) continues its development work on TS 132 in preparation for the June ANSI ASC X12 trimester meeting in Columbus, Ohio. The Task Group members have identified a core set of data elements for inclusion in the Transaction Set and plan to have a draft of the Human Resource Record Transaction Set completed to bring to Subcommittee A in June for preliminary review.

Through monthly meetings via conference call and e-mail using a listserv, the HRTG collaborates to facilitate development activities between meetings. To subscribe to this listserv, access the DISA WWW site: *http://www.disa.org/apps/listserve/listserve.cfm.*

Transaction Set 133 Institutional Record At its February meeting in Anaheim, Task Group 6, the Institutional Record Task Group (IRTG) began to develop Transaction Set 133 for the purpose of exchanging Institutional Record information between entities by defining the Purpose and Scope of the Transaction Set and identifying potential data elements. To this end, the Task Group members divided into three teams to investigate 10 data element categories. The categories and teams are:

> Students, Programs and Facilities: **Gary Graff, Roy Herrold**
> Employees, Finances, Services: **David Fleming, Wayne Shimizu**
> Governance, Location, Type, Crime Statistics: **Carol Fuller, Lee Tack, Rick Skeel**

TG6 welcomes new member, Rick Skeel, Director of Academic Records at the University of Oklahoma, to the group. He represents AACRAO and may also provide a liaison role between Subcommittee A/Task Group 1 and Task Group 6, as he chairs the former. Communication between meetings continues to take place via monthly conference call and e-mail using a listserv. To subscribe to this listserv, access the DISA WWW site at: *http://www.disa.org/apps/listserve/listserve.cfm*

TS 138 Education Testing Report Request and Result

In Anaheim, Subcommittee A Task Group 1 met with representatives from American College Testing (ACT) and ETS to begin work on an implementation guide for Transaction Set 138 — Education Testing Report Request and Result. Judy McPartland of ACT and Pat Salava of ETS are collaborating on a single implementation guide to deliver both ACT and SAT testing results. Advice and expertise were shared by Jeanenne Rothenberger, Jerry Bracken, and Betsy Bainbridge. ETS also plans to have implementation guides prepared in the next few months to accommodate the sending of GMATs and GREs. Watch SPEEDE-L for an announcement of their availability.

Version 4.0 of Implementation Guide Now Available

The AACRAO SPEEDE Committee and the Statistical Networking Applications Project (SNAP) announce the publication of two editions of "A Guide to the Implementation of Electronic Transcripts and Student Records, Version 4.0." These guides cover the following transaction sets:

> **130** Student Educational Record (Transcript)
> **131** Student Educational Record (Transcript) Acknowledgment
> **146** Request for Student Educational Record (Transcript)
> **147** Response to Request for Student Educational Record (Transcript)
> **997** Functional Acknowledgment

Based on the X12 annual release 4010 of December 1997, these two editions are fully compatible, although one is written from the perspective of a postsecondary implementor while the other has a global perspective across all sectors of education—elementary, secondary, and postsecondary. Each edition provides complete information for current SPEEDE/ExPRESS users to upgrade to Version 4010 and for new users to implement these transaction sets.

The edition published by SNAP is a comprehensive document, providing instructions for exchanges between and among PreK - Grade 12 schools/districts and colleges and universities. It includes detailed explanations of X12 structures; enveloping; summaries of segments, data elements and code lists used; and a summary of changes to the standards made since Version 3.0 was published. This edition is available electronically at no charge in Microsoft Word (.doc), Portable Document Format (.pdf), SpecBuilder format (.eds), and Rich Text Format (.rtf) at *http://nces.ed.gov/edi.html* under the "Implementation Documents" link. Bound copies may be purchased from the AACRAO Distribution Center for $75 by calling (301) 490-7651 or by fax at (301) 206-9789. Publication order #6007.

The edition published by the Postsecondary Electronic Standards Council for the AACRAO SPEEDE Committee contains a subset of detail offered in the other edition. It was developed specifically for the postsecondary implementor for exchanging transcripts with other postsecondary institutions and receiving student records from high schools. In addition to the transaction set details, it contains the summary of changes since Version 3.0 and details on the X12 enveloping structures. This postsecondary edition is available electronically at no charge on the web at http://www.standardscouncil.org/transsets.htm. Bound copies may be purchased from the AACRAO Distribution Centerfor $65 by calling (301) 490-7651 or by fax at (301) 206-9789. Publication order #6006.

All institutions currently implementing electronic transcripts and student records should update to this new version as quickly as possible, according to education community representatives serving on X12 Subcommittee A Education Administration. National exchanges can take place only if the implementation versions are compatible. Previous versions have been upwardly compatible, but this one is not. This release is also Year 2000 compliant. A new release of the Implementation Guide will be made available each April based on the most recent X12 annual release of the standards.

Elementary and Secondary

Pennsylvania — Under a Pennsylvania Link to Learn (L2L) Infrastructure Investment Grant entitled "Regional Synergy for Statewide Success: SusQNet", the Carbon Lehigh Intermediate Units (CLIU) and Central Susquehanna Intermediate Units (CSIU) will test the transfer of student transcripts between and among its client districts. Together the two intermediate units serve approximately 150 clients, either school districts, area vocational technical schools (AVTSs), or other intermediate units in Pennsylvania. The testing is part of the "Synergy" grant application submitted by Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania on behalf of more than 20 partnering agencies to bring technology to communities in the central part of the state.

The L2L initiative is Governor Tom Ridge's initiative "to provide Pennsylvania schools, libraries, and communities with virtually unlimited access to the information available on global networks."

The Synergy grant is a follow-up to a previous year L2L successful grant application that is the foundation of the SusQNet, an Asynchronous Transfer Mode (ATM) community-based network in central Pennsylvania, serving a twelve-county region.

The "Synergy" project will extend the SusQNet network and begin the development of a similar regional ATM network in eastern Pennsylvania. The project will also demonstrate connecting those two community networks together by sharing the ATM-based backbone linking the state universities in those two communities, Bloomsburg and East Stroudsburg Universities respectively. Additional programs and services will also be added to the expanding network under the grant.

The EDI portion of the project will test the electronic transfer of transcripts between the two intermediate units' clients. Testing will take place through the early part of the 1999 calendar year.

New York — The New York State Education Department awarded a contract to National Computer Systems (NCS) to conduct a study on the feasibility of implementing a new system of collecting and storing individual student-level data called the Statewide Student Testing and Accountability Reporting System (STARS). The study is in keeping with the Board of Regents' long-standing goal to promote school and district accountability.

The Department began collecting individual student data on state assessment results this year. The goal is to move to a single, comprehensive data collection system, based on student-level information, which will integrate data and enhance reporting capabilities. In the study, NCS will assess the format of data to be collected — including the feasibility of EDI, make recommendations on data storage and retrieval, and address confidentiality and data transmission. The study consists of three phases. Phase one was a literature review, with a focus on experiences and "best practices" implemented within other states.

Phase two, recently completed, consisted of a series of technical and programmatic interviews with staff from several Department offices and representatives of the states' regional Boards of Cooperative Educational Services and Regional Information Centers to determine the current and anticipated capacity for supporting such a system. Phase three, underway now, will include data collection from various stakeholders in two parts: 1) a representative sample survey of school districts on existing technology and capacity; and 2) a series of regional workshops bringing together local and regional parties to address critical technical issues and discuss data elements, confidentiality, and security. During Phase three, based upon information gathered during the project to date, NCS will also present multiple potential implementation models for STARS and gather feedback on those models.

NCS is scheduled to present its final report to the New York State Education Department in late June. For additional information regarding the feasibility study, contact Ron Streeter, New York State Education Department, Office of Research and Evaluation at (518) 474-4269 or *rstreete@mail.nysed.gov.*

Across the Continent

Postsecondary

California — California State University, Sacramento (CSU) now receives EDI transcripts from three Northern California Community Colleges and uploads them directly to the University's SIS Plus (SCT) Degree Audit/ Student Records system, replacing course-by-course manual data entry for approximately 4000 transcripts each year. This cooperative project between CSU Sacramento and the seven Community Colleges that annually send 3000 new students to the University is reducing the time to receive student transcripts and speeding up the evaluation and advising process. A key element of this project has been CSU Sacramento's efforts to actively assist its area Community Colleges in defining, developing and testing SPEEDE transcript extract programs; by this Fall, a total of five community colleges are expected to be sending EDI transcripts to CSU Sacramento.

CSU Sacramento has one of California's top five annual enrollments of new Community College transfer students. Adapting EDI and linking the SPEEDE process to its SCT Degree Audit/Student Records system has met a primary business need by handling thousands of incoming transcripts more efficiently each year, resulting in improved service to students.

Contact: Terrence Cataline, Systems Manager/Admissions & Records, CSU-Sacramento. E-mail: *KEC01@csus.edu* or call (916) 278-5913

Florida — The University of Tampa, Florida is now EDI enabled and ready to receive transcripts. It is registered on the University of Texas EDI Server.

EDI Web Watch

GENERAL SITES

• *http://www.ecworld.org/Resource_Center/Case_Studies/ hornback.html* "An EDI Costs/Benefits Framework" This web site, an article written by Richard Hornback, outlines a framework to determine the measurable costs and benefits of implementing Electronic Data Interchange (EDI).

• *http://www.geocities.com/WallStreet/Floor/1083/ ldcatedi2.htm* Electronic Data Interchange Links — A collection of web sites with helpful information about EDI. This site ranks the usefulness of the sites listed. Sponsor of this site is not known.

• *http://www.e-com.com/buyersguide/* Sponsored by St. Paul Software, the Buyer's Guide to Electronic Commerce is designed to help you find the information you need to gain the full benefits of Electronic Commerce and EDI.
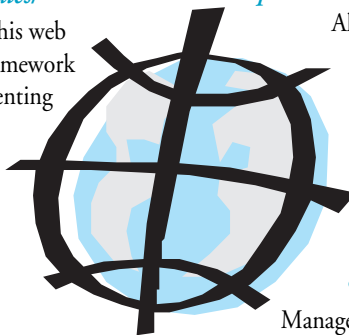
• *http://www.erols.com/jserrat/index.htm* "Everything EDI" This site is dedicated to disseminating useful information about Electronic Data Interchange: EDI. The webmaster, Jim Serrat, searches the web daily for articles about EDI and provides useful links to other EDI-related sites.

EDUCATION SITES

• *http://www.educ.state.ak.us/OASIS/OASIS_1.html* On-line Alaska School Information System (OASIS). The mission of the Alaska Department of Education's OASIS plan is to establish and maintain a cost effective, secure method of accessing and transferring school and critical student-level information between educational entities in need of this information to better serve students. Visit this site to learn more about the state-wide initiative.

• *http://www.fwl.org/smart/.* Nevada's Statewide Management of Automated Record Transfer (SMART) System is a plan to implement computer-based systems and procedures to enable effective student record management at both the state and local levels. Visit this site to learn more about the state-wide initiative.

• *http://nces.ed.gov/edi.html* The SNAP homepage for SPEEDE/ExPRESS and EDI information is loaded with beneficial information and materials for the education community. The NCES-sponsored site provides downloadable and viewable files of the Version 4010 Implementation Guide for the suite of Student Record transaction sets, as well as presentation materials and a business case for EDI. Don't forget to check out the events calendar, the contact information and other useful web links for EDI.

Case In Point

Iowa's Project EASIER

An interview with Coleen McClanahan, Project Coordinator

Spotlight writers asked the collaborators of Project EASIER (Electronic Access System for Iowa Education Records) to respond to questions regarding the implementation efforts thus far for Project EASIER. The project's coordinator compiled the following answers. *(Please note that the complete interview is available on the web edition of the Spotlight. The responses printed hereafter have been shortened.)*

To obtain background information about the project, please refer to the winter issue of the SPOTLIGHT or visit the Project EASIER website at *http://www.state.ia.us/educate/depteduc/fis/edi/easier*.

Q: How and why was the EDI initiative conceived and what decisions and steps were made in beginning the program? Who was involved in these initial efforts?

A: Initial Department of Education interest was a product of collaborative efforts in presenting a statewide SPEEDE/ExPRESS conference in June, 1994. Project EASIER evolved from the efforts of a broadly representative statewide advisory committee organized by the Department of Education in May, 1995 to provide recommendations with respect to content, policy and technological considerations designed to serve as criteria and governing principles to guide the process of EDI in education.

Invitations for nominations to the advisory group were sent to all public school districts, in addition to area education agencies, community colleges, Iowa's three public universities, educational associations, and nonpublic schools.

The goal of the EDI Advisory Committee was to develop a comprehensive set of issues and recommendations related to the development and implementation of a statewide student record system. To facilitate the attainment of this goal, the advisory committee was organized into three basic subgroups each guided by two steering committee members: 1) content; 2) technical; and 3) policy.

Q: How did you analyze your resources?

A: Within the Department an internal EDI committee was formed to provide guidance in directing the statewide advisory committee operations and to facilitate communications within the agency regarding EDI activities. This internal group was composed of staff from areas of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Community Colleges, Data Processing, Special Education, Internal Technology support, Technical and Vocational Education, and Administration, Instruction and School Improvement. This group meets regularly to identify unresolved issues, plan future activities and coordinate efforts.

Q: What was lacking?

A: Both internal and external technical support was lacking. More technical support was required then anticipated. The type of technical knowledge and skills needed for this type of project was lacking.

Q: What were your strongest resources/assets?

A: The interest and support of the statewide advisory committee, and commitment to the project by several key department staff. Good communication of the goals and potential of the project through a video, meetings, written materials, and personal visits.

Vendor SPOTLITE

NCS Announces EDI Capabilities Within SASIxp

National Computer Systems, Inc., (NCS) recently announced plans to provide integrated EDI capabilities as a module to their popular cross-platform SASIxp student information system.

Utilizing the robust Entrata product for data mapping, translation and communications, NCS will initially focus on providing users with the capabilities of exchanging TS130 transcript-related data from SASIxp.

"We're excited about providing our users with the ability to exchange pertinent data via EDI," said Rob Miller, NCS EDI Product Manager. "The K-12 education community is really beginning to see that EDI can provide significant tangible benefits, such as reducing costs of exchanging student information and making information more reliable and timely, and many are in the process of evaluating and implementing available solutions"

"Within the past year, SASIxp experienced a more than 300% increase in installations, making it NCS' fastest growing student information systems product. With expectations of more than 9,000 SASIxp installations by year end, NCS is clearly positioned as the market leader in assisting schools and districts in their EDI implementations."

Focusing on ease of use, speed of transactions, and confidentiality/security of data, NCS plans to release their SASIxp EDI module for sale coinciding with release 4.0 of SASIxp in October of this year.

With the EDI module, users will be able to seamlessly select student information to be extracted from SASIxp, mapped to the TS130 format, and sent to a trading partner via FTP, as an Internet email attachment, or through a direct dial-up connection. Once the transmission is received successfully, either a TS131 or TS997 will be generated and acknowledged to the sender.

NCS is also researching adding the ability for users to report certain data electronically to state departments of education via EDI from SASIxp, and will be releasing this capability in a custom format upon request.

"NCS provides 11 state departments of education with an EDI-based tracking system that has successfully exchanged more than 1 million student records of migrant children," said Miller.
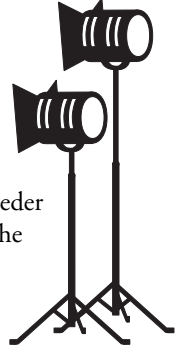
We've also provided the State of Iowa with technical assistance, EDI consulting, and use of Entrata for the past two years in support of their Project EASIER initiative. We have a good base of experience from which to draw upon for this module or custom EDI implementations."

NCS is the nation's single largest provider of school-based financial management, student information, and instructional/curriculum management software and services to the K-12 education market. NCS also provides service solutions to the education industry, including network design and implementation, network administration, systems integration and support, outsourcing, consulting, and training.

Contact: Rob Miller at 319-339-6943 or email him at *Rob_Miller @NCS.COM.*

NCS Selected for Santa Barbara City College Electronic Transcript Project

National Computer Systems, Inc, (NCS) was recently selected by Santa Barbara City College (SBCC) to provide assistance in the implementation of EDI for the college's four local feeder high schools under the Santa Barbara City College Electronic Transcript Project.

As part of this project, the four local high schools will send electronic transcripts to Santa Barbara City College, California State University, California State-Northridge, and the University of California, Santa Barbara.

NCS is providing data extraction services from the high school's student information system, custom mapping to TS130 standards, its Entrata software for managing the EDI transactions, and a full suite of services to facilitate the implementation process.

Contact: Jane Craven from SBCC at craven@sbcc.net or Rob Miller from NCS at *Rob_Miller @ NCS.COM.*

Spotlight on VIPs in EDI

The SPEEDE/ExPRESS Spotlight is proud to highlight Mike Read in the Spring Spotlight's VIP in EDI. His proactivity in the education community extends well beyond his responsibilities as the Assistant Director for Accountability, the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS), and System-wide Testing for the Austin Independent School District (AISD). Mike also serves on many local, state and national committees and task forces involved with technology and EDI in education. Mike is the Chairperson for the ANSI ASC X12 Subcommittee A, Human Resources Task Force, a group challenged with the task of designing a transaction set for electronic exchange of human resource data. Initially, his interest in EDI developed from his work with the University of Texas on the development of an electronic transcript in 1980. Since then he has earned a Master of Education degree and has participated on several advisory committees, including the NCES group that authored "Technology @ Your Fingertips." AISD sends formatted TS 130 records electronically to about 20 institutions nationally through the Texas Server for students applying to colleges and universities. On EDI implementation, Mike offers this advice, "Go slowly…Call upon the vast number of others who have already implemented an EDI program. You can enter the realm of EDI in incremental steps and not dive in with a full-blown effort all at once. Functionality and capabilities can be expanded later." You can contact Mike Read at (512) 414-2221 or email him at *rmread@admin.austin.tenet.edu*

Mike Read

Q: How did you obtain management approval?

A: Top level management of the department was involved from the very beginning. In addition, the Director of the Department of Education and State Board of Education have a strong interest in electronic transmission of data from local districts to the state agency and to colleges and universities. The statewide advisory committee has been a strong base of support as well.

Q: How did you identify champions for the initiative?

A: Champions evolved out of the advisory committee, pilot sites, and within the department of education. In addition the registrars at the state universities became champions. The State Board of Education is anxious for the electronic transfer of data to become a reality in the state of Iowa.

Q: Do you have any recommendations for other state/institutions who are interested in beginning a program?

A: Work with postsecondary institutions since many of them are already involved in EDI. Develop a communications plan and a technical support plan.

Q: What were the biggest concerns and potential drawbacks for the project?

A: 1) Many local school districts do not have personnel with the technical knowledge required to use automated student information systems for EDI.

2) Some local school districts do not have staff who can devote the time necessary to populate the student information with the required data elements.

3) The creation of a Project EASIER team at the district level is extremely important. Personnel familiar with each facet of the project must be involved. These teams have not always been available.

4) Student information systems must be looked at on a districts wide basis. Many districts are making building level decisions without considering what information system is needed across the entire district and at all levels in the district.

Looking Back

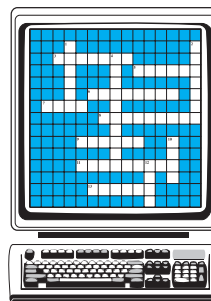**Q: What were the biggest obstacles encountered as Iowa began the Initiative?**

A: Developing a plan or strategy for implementation that would be workable for the sites involved.

Q: What are some other important considerations when implementing an EDI program?

A: • Make sure participants understand what EDI is all about and what they will need to do.

• Develop a list of expectations/recommendations for participation

• Identify data elements for district to state transmissions.

• Market EDI concepts. Develop and implement a communication plan.

• If transmissions of postsecondary transcripts will be done, the postsecondary institutions need to be involved in the identification of the necessary elements. Cost/benefit analysis issues have not been a strong component of project EASIER.

The SPOTLIGHT staff would like to thank Coleen McClanahan for her participation in this interview. Questions and comments regarding Project EASIER may be directed to the Project EASIER Coordinator, Coleen McClanahan, (515) 281-7509 or thru email at *cmcclan@ed.state.ia.us.*

The entire interview, complete with extended responses and additional questions, may be viewed on the web version of the Spring Spotlight. Visit the SPEEDE/ExPRESS homepage at http://nces.ed.gov/edi.html.

SPEEDE/ExPRESSions

This month's SPEEDE/ExPRESSions puzzle and clues can be viewed on the SPEEDE/ExPRESS homepage. Please visit the site at *http://nces.ed.gov edi.html.*

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